

United States Army Heritage and Education Center

Discussions on Military History Roundtable

A quarterly forum on military history

Lessons of Command: Iraq

General (Ret.) James T. Conway
34th Commandant, United States Marine Corps

General (Retired) James T. Conway experienced only war during his four-year tenure as the 34th Commandant for the United States Marine Corps. He served in the conflict in Iraq at multiple levels: commanding hundreds of thousands of troops on the ground for the invasion, on the operations side as J3 (Operations) on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and as an advisor to the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Council, and the President. When he assumed the Commandant position, General Conway's accountability within the war increased. He was responsible for the organization, training, equipping, and overall support of over 250,000 Marine Corps active duty, reserve, and civilian personnel. These perspectives allow General Conway to offer detailed insights on military lessons learned, the quality of intelligence during the Iraq invasion and beyond, and the next steps in the Global War on Terrorism. General Conway's leadership style focused on developing the quality of the individual Marine, a strategy he believes was essential to a U.S. victory in Iraq.

In this installment of the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center's (USAHEC) quarterly "Discussions on Military History," General Conway will present this extensive understanding of the Iraq War. He will cover the U.S. Marine Corps' preparation for Operation Iraqi Freedom, anecdotes from his Expeditionary Force's journey to Baghdad, weapons of mass destruction, the transition of the U.S. presence in Iraq from liberation to occupation, planning and executing phase four operations, the Surge and the Awakening, and critical mistakes made. His lecture will conclude with his view of present-day Iraq, and how the country factors into U.S. international operations and challenges over the next decade. After the talk, our esteemed panel of experts will respond to General Conway with their own thoughts and questions about the Iraq War.

General Conway served as the President of the Marine Corps University, Commanding General of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, and Commander of the 1st Marine Division, prior to his Joint Chiefs of Staff and Commandant positions. As Commandant, he spearheaded wounded warrior initiatives and post traumatic stress awareness. In 2007, he founded the Wounded Warrior Regiment to help injured Marines and their families through recovery, reintegration, and transition into the force or civilian life. He also increased the size of the Marine Corps to 202,000, troops in order to decrease each Marine's deployment rate and also reduce mental/physical fatigue. In 2010, General Conway retired after 40 years of service. He remains involved with policy as co-chair of the Energy Security Leadership Council of SAFE (Securing America's Future Energy), working to reduce U.S. oil dependence.

DATE: Saturday, September 12, 2015, 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM

Place: USAHEC, Visitor and Education Center, Multi-Purpose Room

For updates and any last-minute changes meeting times and places, please check the USAHEC homepage: www.USAHEC.org or call the Information Desk: (717) 245-3972.